



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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Hartford, CT 06106-1658

Senate Bill 314

An Act Concerning Military or Veteran Status on State-Issued Forms and Publications

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
March 2, 2010

The Department of Administrative Services ("DAS") offers the following testimony concerning some operational difficulties presented by **Senate Bill 314, An Act Concerning Military or Veteran Status on State-Issued Forms and Publications**.

This bill directs all agencies to add a question to any new forms or publications that it distributes to the public (and are returnable to the agency) asking whether the recipient of the form or publication is a member of the armed forces or a veteran who would like to receive information regarding veterans' benefits. The bill also requires state agencies to forward the name and address of all individuals who responded affirmatively to the Department of Veterans' Affairs ("DVA"), so that the DVA can add such information to its contact list.

As a threshold matter, it is not clear whether "new forms or publications" means any form or publication that has not been printed yet or whether this legislation applies only to forms or publications that are completely novel. It is also unclear whether this legislation would apply to on-line forms and publications.

Of greater concern to DAS, however, are the administrative burdens associated with compiling and maintain the information called for in this legislation. Presumably, each agency would be required to assign staff members to review all returned forms and publications to see if any recipients indicated they would like information, enter each interested individual's name and address into a database and then coordinate with DVA regarding the transfer of that information to DVA. Moreover, it is not at all clear that this broad sweep will result in adding significantly more people to DVA's existing contact list. In the current fiscal climate, in which agencies have fewer people and resources, this initiative - while well-intentioned - requires agencies to divert their staff's time and resources away from their own core missions to provide information that may not add real value to the DVA.

Finally, this legislation creates a loophole in the confidentiality provisions already in place to protect the confidentiality of the veterans and service members who are seeking information regarding benefits. Under existing law, the DVA or the Military Department must not disclose any information in the contact list to any other person or for any other use except as provided in the statute. Under Senate Bill 314, agencies will now be required to possess this confidential information but the agencies will not be able to protect it. To the contrary, the very information that shall not be disclosed by DVA or the Military Department must be disclosed if any other agency receives a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking for it.

Thank you for your consideration of DAS's testimony. If you have questions about this testimony, please contact DAS's legislative liaison, Andrea Keilty (860-713-5267).